



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Carlsbad Caverns
National Park

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Carlsbad Caverns News Release

For Immediate Release
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Caverns' Fire Management Plan EA Available for Public Comment

Acting superintendent John Benjamin is pleased to announce the availability of Carlsbad Caverns National Park's Fire Management Plan Environmental Assessment (EA) for public review and comment. This EA examines the possible impacts of implementing the proposed Fire Management Plan (FMP). The park developed the FMP and accompanying EA to incorporate advances in fire knowledge, results of burning and monitoring programs in the park, and revisions in National Park Service (NPS) policy. The EA considers three alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, following the National Environmental Policy Act.

Established to preserve Carlsbad Cavern and numerous other caves within a Permian- age fossil reef, Carlsbad Caverns National Park contains no known caves. In addition to its cave resources, the park protects 46,766 acres of Chihuahuan Desert. To protect this fragile desert ecosystem, the park seeks to develop a fire management program that places the highest priority on firefighter safety and resource protection. The proposed cornerstones of the program are fuels management along the park boundary, interagency fire planning, increased suppression capability, and research on the effects of wildland and prescribed fire on natural and cultural resources.

There is a 30- day public comment period on the EA. Comments will be accepted through Tuesday, April 5, 2005. Comments may be mailed to Fire Management Plan EA, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, 3225 National Parks Highway, Carlsbad, New Mexico 88220; e- mailed to CAVE_planning@nps.gov; or faxed to 505.785.2133.

Copies of the document are available online at www.nps.gov/cave/pphtml/documents.html, the park visitor center and administrative office, and the Carlsbad Municipal Library.

To be placed on a mailing list to receive planning- related information, contact Bridget Litten, public affairs specialist, at 505.785.3024.

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